

HOUSING FUTURES

Volume 1, Issue 4— December 2011



AGM—Beyond 2012

The SouthEast AGM was held at the Dandenong Club between 7:14—8:20 p.m. with 43 members in attendance. It was getting down to business in the context of the International Year of Co-operatives 2012— two directors re-elected and two new directors joining the board, approval of the Annual Report, adoption of the Services Charter, endorsement for further work by a Member Working Party, approval of 12 special resolution Rule changes, Shirley Faram was re-elected Chairperson and Natalie Leddick was elected Secretary after serving as Acting Secretary.



Shirley in CanberraLand

Why was SouthEast Chairperson Shirley in Parliament House, Canberra on 22 November 2011? Shirley is pictured after a Launch—looking forward to a Summit. South-East General Manager, Ian McLaren, was with Shirley in Canberra.



CO-OPERATIVE CANBERRA

The Summit

The Australian Launch of the International Year of Co-operatives was on Tuesday 22 November 2012 at Parliament House, Canberra, Australian Capital City with about 100 people in attendance. The Launch was followed by a Co-op Summit. Chairperson Shirley Faram and General Manager Ian McLaren were at the Launch and Summit. Tasmanian housing co-operator Linda Seaborn was also present and during the day filed impressions on the proceedings—reprinted courtesy of Linda and Co-operatives Victoria (<http://www.victoria.coop>). They are evocative impressions of what was happening at the time. Linda is a member of the Cohousing Co-operative Ltd in Tasmania

<http://www.cohousingcoop.org.au/>

**Authorised by Shirley Faram,
on behalf of the SouthEast
Board, December 2011.**

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operative Ltd, PO Box 7141,
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4: 53 p.m. Public relations expert Alex Cramb attended the summit and gave his feedback. He said that the summit has been exciting. That this group represents many members. We represent a large movement. The Secretariat has done a great job bringing IYC this far. We sit on the verge of something very good. The fundamentals of the cooperative movement are sound, they are not old fashioned. How do coops grab attention. What is it you want to say? The different initiatives in this room are fascinating. How do we tell our story and who's going to tell it for us.

We need a key messages in five dot points. We have about 100 stories straight up. These are the vehicles to use to promote growth and membership. We have a movement, we have members who can tell our stories for us. Everyone here speaks with great pride and conviction. That is very powerful. We need to capture the hearts and minds of the decision makers. We've only got one year. After that it's international year of something else. We need to agree quickly on what our messages are. Pool our interesting stories. We need a spokesperson who carries your message. The five dot points. The End

3 : 58 p.m. Discussion taking place about the potential role of a national body. A report from an attendant at the ICA gathering in Cancun that coop movements around the world are facing the same issues regarding communicating the strengths and successes of coops. See:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mobileweb/emily-kennedy/co-op-movement_b_1095577.html

2:43 pm. The national levy has worked to a certain extent, similar to levels for the ICA and other national bodies. The participants discussed marketing strategies and a revised marketing strategy based on a realistic budget, with education as a focus, and a need to be clearer about relations with the state based federations.

2: 20 p.m. Contributions to IYC will allow us to maximise the potential of 2012. It's not too late to talk to your board and make a contribution. Discussion was opened about what are the priorities for the secretariat to resource and whether we need to raise more budget. Responses from the floor included noting that many of the state federations are not present and are there mixed messages about whether we are working through state bodies or at a national level; the need to involve academia for research, and mainstream media - we need feature events for media coverage.

1: 53 p.m. Melina Morrison spoke about the opportunity for coops to determine what we as cooperators want to get out of the IYC. She summarised some of the discussion from the previous summit. Cooperatives Australia have produced a Top 100 list and this has been useful in educating decision-

CO-OPERATIVE CANBERRA

“The IYC Launch and Summit was a powerful reminder of the value and necessity of co-operators and co-operatives co-operating,” David Griffiths, Secretary, Co-operatives Australia and Co-operatives Victoria



The IYC Launch in Canberra

-makers about coops. We need a fund to resource things like further research in this area. We are also starting to coordinate research about the cooperative sector, at a national level. The University of WA is also having a launch for IYC today. Melinda reported that to date one third of the projected fundraising budget has been achieved. If we are going to achieve the potential of what IYC offers it is important to achieve full support from the sector, and this includes financial.

1: 41 p.m. We need to educate lawyers and accountants about the coop model. Our state federations are not able to be effective at a national level and this is why we need to cooperate at a national level. This has been demonstrated by what we have been able to achieve here today by cooperating across the states.

1: 30 p.m. Greg Wall spoke about the International launch of IYC. Although the Australian sector was the only country to make a presentation at the launch, the Australian government did not make a formal statement though, which was disappointing. The Australian delegation visited Occupy Wall St. This movement highlights the interest in structures such as coops.

The Launch

12: 26 p.m. The Honorable Ursula Stephens congratulated Social Business Australia for stepping up to be the Secretariat for the IYC. This week is Social Inclusion week, which is appropriate for this launch. Cooperatives help communities to thrive. It gives people the opportunity to be ethical consumers. Seventy five per cent of Fair Trade products originate in third world coops.

12: 21 p.m. Rod Stowe, NSW Fair Trading Commissioner is speaking about uniform cooperative law and the development of the supporting national regulations. The uniform law will reduce costs for coops operating across state jurisdictions. Coops will have easier access to financial markets without reducing their member control. Small coops will have less onerous financial reporting obligations. The successful completion of this legislation is due in 2012 and is a fitting recognition of the International Year of Cooperatives.

12:03 p.m. The Honorable Bill Shorten is now launching the IYC coin. He is speaking about the links between unions and cooperatives and the industrial action at Rochdale that led to the formation of the first coop. He has talked about the difference of the mutual model as opposed to the 'rent seeking' model of business. The Gillard government sees a bright future for mutuals. Australia's has the third largest mutual banking sector in the world, after the US and Canada.

11: 57 a.m. The Honorable David Bradbury is speaking about the Hepburn Wind Farm as an example of a cooperative working with the local community, balancing economic viability with social responsibility, and the role of cooperatives around the world in pulling communities out of poverty. The Australian IYC is now launched!

11: 53 a.m. Greg Wall has just spoken about the value of the cooperative model in Australia and the purpose of IYC. The Honorable David Bradbury is launching the IYC in Australia. He pointed out that there are more Australians who are members of mutuals than there are Australians who are shareholders in companies.

THE AGM—BEYOND 2012



A pensive moment for Chairperson Shirley Faram during the AGM.

“A New Standard”

General Manager, Ian McLaren, believes that the 2010-2011 Annual Report has set a new standard for accountability and transparency to members.

“What we have tried to do is present an honest report that reflects on strengths and weaknesses—on what we have done, what we are doing and what we will do.”

He said that for the first time there was a business analysis of strategies, performance highlights and business review. “The Annual Report also provides an analysis of some performance standards.”

He said he expected that the Annual Report for 2011-2012 will be better. “It will build on this year’s report. The theme of this year’s Annual Report is Beyond 2012—In Prospect. Next year, it will be Beyond 2012—In retrospect.””

THE AGM—BEYOND 2012



Members voting on one of 21 votes during the AGM

AGM Supports Member Working Party

After receiving the Member Working Party report, the AGM adopted this resolution:

That the report of the Communications Working Party be received with thanks and the members (Gayle Koubwere, Melinda Johnston, Greg Nolan, Danielle Manu, Ian McLaren and Dale Carroll) be congratulated on their work and that the term of office be extended to the next AGM and that the Working Party work with the board to develop a broader communications terms of reference and present its next report to the next general meeting of members.



Greg Nolan presenting the Member Working Party Report to the AGM

Future board meetings—24 February , 23 March, 27 April and 25 May 2012

More information—General Manager Ian McLaren



The Art of Listening

Four directors intently listening to the proceedings during the AGM from L to R: Natalie Leddick, Louise Kloot, Steve Kropf and Tracey Hall.



IYC Collectable Coin

In January 2012 the Royal Australian Mint will release an International Year of Co-operatives 2012 \$1 collectable coin.

The coin will actually cost more than \$1 and the current estimated price, without prejudice, is \$14.

The board at its meeting on 25 November 2011 considered whether or not during 2012 it would gift to members the unique once in a lifetime coin. The coins would be presented at a general meeting of members.

There are two considerations before the board makes a decision (a) the final cost of the coin and (b) whether members are interested.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a Collectable Coin Form to enable members to register whether or not they would be interested in receiving a IYC 2012 Coin. The closing date for registering an interest is the 15 December 2011. The board will make a final decision at its meeting on 16 December 2011.

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The set-up for the AGM was changed to bring the board and members closer together.

AGM Approved

Thirty six members at the meeting completed the meeting evaluation form—a 84% response rate. The overall rating for the meeting was 88% for Very Good or Good—67% Very Good and 21% Good. The highest score was for the information circulated before the meeting—100% Very Helpful or Helpful—76% Very Helpful and 24% Helpful. The venue was rated 87% Very Good or Good - 82% Very Good and 15% Good. The location of the meeting was 97% Very Good or Good—76% Very Good and 21% Good. The presentation at the meeting was rated 88% Very Helpful or Helpful—55% Very Helpful and 33% Helpful. The discussion at the meeting was rated 74% Very Helpful and Helpful—56% Very Helpful and 18% Helpful.

Rule Changes

The AGM approved 12 special resolutions for changes to the Rules.

The Rules of the co-operative govern the relationship between members and the co-operative.

Most of the changes to the Rules deleted redundant provisions or clarified meanings and situations.

“What I hope to achieve is not achievable without the support of all staff—each has an important role in ensuring SouthEast provides a high quality service to members of the cooperative”

“An ongoing challenge for SouthEast is to increase and improve accountability and transparency to members.”



The senatorial General Manager, Ian McLaren, at the AGM

Co-op Documentary and Advertorial

The board has agreed to commission a documentary and advertorial about SouthEast as a model of co-operative practice and as a contribution to the International Year of Co-operatives 2012.

The documentary and advertorial will be completed by 14 February 2012 and will be shown to SouthEast members before a public launch at the National Housing Co-operative Conference on 8 March 2012 at Federation Square.

The documentary and/or advertorial will be used for member induction, workshops and uploaded to web sites—SouthEast, australia.coop, victoria.coop, australia2012.coop and to video sharing sites such as YouTube, Google Video, MySpace TV, Veoh and Hulu.

Members interested in finding out more about the documentary and advertorial should contact the General Manager, Ian McLaren.